



Press Release:

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For Immediate Release

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JAMES NAMES TOP COP

Mayor Names Former Irvington Police Director to Head Newark's Force

Robert J. Rankin, Jr., a retired Newark police officer and former police director in Irvington, was named today by Mayor Sharpe James to head up the police department in New Jersey's largest city.

"He is a career police officer who held every rank in the Newark Police Department and consistently was one of the highest scorers on the Civil Service exams," said James in introducing his nominee to the City Council earlier today. The governing body must approve the Mayor's recommendations for department directors and is scheduled to do so during its reorganization meeting following the 12 noon swearing in of the Mayor and City Council members.

Rankin, who retired from the Newark Department in 1998 as a deputy chief, joined the force in 1967 and rose through the ranks becoming the first African-American to serve as the commanding officer in the East Ward Precinct. He also served as commander in the South District and chief of staff to the Police Chief.

"He knows all the players both in the Newark Police Department and in the other county, state and federal law enforcement agencies with whom we have partnered to fight crime and maintain our decrease in criminal activity," said the Mayor. Newark's crime rate fell 52 percent between 1995 and 2000.

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Police Director ad 1

Rankin will be charged with overseeing a department whose priorities include the threat of terrorism in the wake of last September's attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, as well as tackling crime and drugs in the neighborhoods, explained James. "We also will address those crimes that threaten our quality of life," he noted.

A Newark native and graduate of South Side High School, Rankin holds a degree in accounting from Seton Hall University. He served in the U.S. Army from 1962 to 1965 and received an Honorable Discharge.